

spirit. He has been and always will be larger than life.

The first song she ever performed in public was "God Will Take Care of You." Well, God was taking care of all us when he gave us Jessye Norman's wondrous voice. From a church choir in Georgia to center stage at the Met, Jessye Norman has brought joy to music lovers and critics to their feet. Her voice has been called the greatest instrument in the world. Her greatness, however, lies not just in her sound but in her soul. She has that rare gift for capturing in musical truths of the human experience, truths that can never be fully expressed in words alone. Having brought new meaning to Mozart and Wagner, Berlioz and Stravinsky, Jessye Norman remains an American diva. Indeed, when she sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" at my Inauguration earlier this year, I thought the flag was buoyed by the waves of her voice. I must say, Jessye, you were a tough act to follow. [Laughter]

After 40 albums, Grammy Awards, and the standing ovation of the entire world, she stands at the pinnacle of her art. Jessye Norman once said she wasn't the kind of woman to walk into a room unnoticed. [Laughter] And I can testify that that is true, having been in many rooms with her and never failing to notice. Since she first burst on the scene, her brilliance has held our attention, year-in and year-out. May the supernova of Jessye Norman shine forever.

As a young man, Edward Villella was a varsity baseball player and a welterweight boxing champion. He might have made the big leagues, but his heart led him into a different world. He

was a major league dancer from the moment he joined the New York City Ballet. As graceful as he was athletic, he mesmerized audiences and choreographers alike. Balanchine and Robbins created dances that only Villella could dance. The art rose to meet the man, and the man was always flying. He dominated the stage with space-swallowing charisma and leaps as effortless as they were breathtaking. He toured the Soviet Union at the height of the cold war and became the only American dancer ever to be demanded to give an encore. Today he brings the same energy and creativity to the shaping of the Miami City Ballet into America's next great dance company.

Long before Michael Jordan, Edward Villella showed us that man indeed could fly. [Laughter] Thank you for taking American dance to new heights.

Lauren Bacall, Bob Dylan, Charlton Heston, Jessye Norman, Edward Villella: artists and Americans who have made indelible imprints on the performing arts and on our national character. It is quite a tribute to them that all of you have come for them tonight. In them we find the sass, the raw emotion, the heroic strength, the passionate voice, the soaring aspirations of our Nation.

America salutes each and every one of you. Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to choreographers Jerome Robbins and the late George Balanchine; and NBA basketball player Michael Jordan.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Most-Favored-Nation Trade Status for Certain Former Eastern Bloc States

December 5, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I hereby transmit a report concerning emigration laws and policies of Albania, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan as required by subsections 402(b) and 409(b) of title IV of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "Act"). I have determined that Albania, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are in full com-

pliance with subsections 402(a) and 409(a) of the Act. As required by title IV, I will provide the Congress with periodic reports regarding the compliance of Albania, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan with these emigration standards.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 8. The related memorandum

of December 5 on emigration policies of Albania, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Text of a Letter to Shelia Davis Lawrence *December 8, 1997*

It is with a deep sense of personal sadness that I received your letter this afternoon. I will of course ensure that the Department of Defense accommodates your wishes.

I will always remember Larry for his friendship and for his service to his community and our country. And I will never forget Larry's remarkable success as a businessman, his generosity as a philanthropist and his skill as a diplomat.

I know this has been a difficult time for you and I sincerely hope that you find peace in the days ahead.

NOTE: The letter referred to Mrs. Lawrence's late husband, M. Larry Lawrence, former Ambassador to Switzerland. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Statement on the Death of Jeanette E. Rockefeller *December 9, 1997*

Hillary joins me in extending our condolences to the family of the late Jeanette E. Rockefeller, who died yesterday at the age of 79. As the wife of former Governor Winthrop Rockefeller, she was a pioneering First Lady of Arkansas, helping her former husband bring the "New South" to our State and leading women into the mainstream of political and public life. She spearheaded education and cultural outreach across the State through the Arkansas Arts Cen-

ter. As a tireless campaigner, Mrs. Rockefeller was a strong voice against discrimination, with an uncanny ability to relate to the common man and woman. And, at a particularly tense time in the wake of Martin Luther King's assassination, she organized a memorial service in his honor on the steps of the State Capitol.

The people of Arkansas have lost a true and valued friend.

Statement on the 40th Anniversary of the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division *December 9, 1997*

I congratulate the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice on its 40th anniversary. For 40 years, the Civil Rights Division has protected the American dream for all our people. By diligently and faithfully enforcing our civil rights laws, the lawyers and members of this division have helped all of us live closer to the ideals that lie at the heart of that dream—free-

dom and equality of opportunity to work, to learn, to live, and to raise our children in communities where they can thrive and grow.

Today, the task of fulfilling the promise of our civil rights laws, of keeping the American dream alive for all citizens is far from over.